Amendments to the Claims

1. (previously amended) A composition prepared by forming a mixture comprising, on the basis of parts by weight per hundred of elastomer or rubber, phr:

(a) 100 phr of a mixture comprising vulcanizable elastomers styrene-butadiene copolymer and butadiene-acrylonitrile copolymer and at least one thermoplastic polymer or thermoplastic elastomer comprising polyvinyl chloride;

(b) from about 150 phr to about 500 phr of at least one mineral filler;

(c) from about 0.1 phr to about 10 phr of at least one pigment or colorant;

B1 C0M (d) at least one vulcanizing agent in sufficient quantity to substantially fully vulcanize said vulcanizable elastomers; and

(e) from about 0.01 to about 10 phr of at least one odor masking agent;

wherein, upon vulcanization, said composition has the look and feel of natural clay.

2. (previously amended) The composition of claim 1 wherein said vulcanizable elastomers further include at least one additional elastomer selected from the group consisting of natural rubber and synthetic rubber.

3. (previously amended) The composition of claim 2 wherein said synthetic rubber is selected from the group consisting of ethylene-propylene copolymers and terpolymers, hydrogenated styrene-containing block copolymers, polybutadiene, polyisoprene and butyl rubber.

4. (canceled)

5. (previously amended) The composition of claim 1 wherein the mixture of butadiene-acrylonitrile copolymer and

polyvinyl chloride comprises from about 50 wt.% to about 20 wt.% polyvinyl chloride.

6. (original) The composition of claim 5 wherein the ratio of butadiene-acrylonitrile copolymer to styrene-butadiene copolymer is from about 40:60 to about 60:40.

7. (original) The composition of claim 6 further comprising a thermosetting resin.

8. (original) The composition of claim 7 wherein said thermosetting resin is a coumarone-indene resin.

9. (canceled)

10. (previously amended) The composition of claim 1 wherein said at least one odor masking agent is selected from the group consisting of natural and artificial scents.

11. (original) The composition of claim 10 wherein said at least one odor masking agent is an extract of vanilla.

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12. (original) The composition of claim 1 wherein said at least one mineral filler is selected from the group consisting of whiting, hard clay, soft clay, kaolin, hydrated aluminum silicate, and silica sand.

13. (canceled)

14. (previously amended) A vulcanized, molded object having the look and feel of natural clay prepared by:

(1) forming a mixture of a molding composition comprising, on the basis of parts by weight per hundred of elastomer or rubber, phr:

(a) 100 phr of a mixture comprising vulcanizable elastomers styrene-butadiene copolymer and butadiene-acrylonitrile copolymer and at least one thermoplastic polymer or thermoplastic elastomer comprising polyvinyl chloride;

(b) from about 150 phr to about 500 phr of at least one mineral filler;

(c) from about 0.1 phr to about 10 phr of at least one pigment or colorant;

(d) at least one vulcanizing agent in sufficient quantity to substantially fully vulcanize said vulcanizable elastomers; and

(e) from about 0.01 to about 10 phr of at least one odor masking agent;

(2) molding the resultant mixture to a desired shape; and

(3) curing or vulcanizing said shaped mixture;

wherein, upon vulcanization, said object has the look and feel of natural clay.

15. (previously amended) The molded object of claim 14 further comprising a thermosetting resin.

16. (previously amended) The molded object of claim 15 wherein said thermosetting resin is a coumarone-indene resin.

17. (original) The molded object of claim 16 wherein said at least one mineral filler is a mixture comprising whiting and hard clay.

18. (canceled)

19. (original) The molded object of claim 14 wherein said object is a container structure selected from the group consisting of horticultural containers and saucers and beverage bottle coolers.

20. (original) The molded object of claim 19 wherein said container structure is a horticultural container or a wine bottle cooler.

21. (canceled)

22. (previously amended) The molded object of claim 14 having improved low temperature and mechanical stability properties.

23. (original) The molded object of claim 14 wherein said at least one vulcanizing agent is of capable of inhibiting plant

root growth and is present in an amount greater than that required to substantially fully vulcanize said at least one vulcanizable elastomer and said object is a horticultural container.

24. (original) The molded object of claim 23 wherein said at least one vulcanizing agent includes 2-mercaptobenzothiazole and/or zinc dimethyldithiocarbamate.

25. (new) A method of making a natural clay substitute or natural terracotta substitute comprising forming a mixture comprising, on the basis of parts by weight per hundred of elastomer or rubber, phr:

(a) 100 phr of a mixture comprising vulcanizable elastomers styrene-butadiene copolymer and butadiene-acrylonitrile copolymer and at least one thermoplastic polymer or thermoplastic elastomer comprising polyvinyl chloride;

(b) from about 150 phr to about 500 phr of at least one mineral filler;

(c) from about 0.1 phr to about 10 phr of at least one pigment or colorant;

(d) at least one vulcanizing agent in sufficient quantity to substantially fully vulcanize said vulcanizable elastomers; and

(e) from about 0.01 to about 10 phr of at least one odor masking agent;

wherein, upon vulcanization, said composition has the look and feel of natural clay.

26. (new) The method of claim 25 wherein said mixture further comprises a thermosetting resin.

27. (new) The method of claim 26 wherein said thermosetting resin is a coumarone-indene resin.

28. (new) A method of making a molded object of a natural clay substitute or natural terracotta substitute having the look and feel of natural clay or natural terracotta, comprising:

(1) forming a mixture comprising, on the basis of parts by weight per hundred of elastomer or rubber, phr:

(a) 100 phr of a mixture comprising vulcanizable elastomers styrene-butadiene copolymer and butadiene-acrylonitrile copolymer and at least one thermoplastic polymer or thermoplastic elastomer comprising polyvinyl chloride;

(b) from about 150 phr to about 500 phr of at least one mineral filler;

(c) from about 0.1 phr to about 10 phr of at least one pigment or colorant;

(d) at least one vulcanizing agent in sufficient quantity to substantially fully vulcanize said vulcanizable elastomers; and

(e) from about 0.01 to about 10 phr of at least one odor masking agent;

(2) molding said mixture so as to impart the structure of a desired object; and

(3) vulcanizing said molded object.

29. (new) The method of claim 28 wherein said mixture further comprises a thermosetting resin.

30. (new) The method of claim 29 wherein said thermosetting resin is a coumarone-indene resin.